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SUBJECT: SCENESSETTER FOR LIEUTENANT GENERAL BURGESS'S MARCH
30 VISIT TO QATAR

Classified By: AMBASSADOR JOSEPH E. LEBARON FOR REASONS 1.4 (b and d).

¶1. (SBU) Lieutenant General Burgess, Embassy Doha welcomes your visit to Qatar. I personally very much look forward to meeting you and joining you for meetings with the Qatari leadership.

¶2. (SBU) We have requested the following meetings for the morning of March 30:

-- The Crown Prince, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, who has overall responsibility for Qatar's military and security services;

-- The Chief of Staff of the Qatar Armed Forces, Major General Hamad bin Ali al-Attiyeh;

-- The Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence and Security (effectively your counterpart), Colonel Ahmed bin Nasser al-Thani.

¶3. (C) Meeting times will become clearer as your visit draws near. I am also planning a meeting at my residence with the Defense Attache prior to the requested office calls. This will allow us to meet and further discuss items relevant to the day's agenda.

¶4. (C) Relationship-building is clearly a major objective for your visit. But I want to accomplish even more - to advance our cooperation and sharing of information, both with the Government of Qatar and the Qatar Armed Forces. The Defense Intelligence Agency is an ideal vehicle for that.

¶5. (C) Below are four sections of information that, in their entirety, present the Country Team's views on how your visit can best advance the U.S. Government's strategic objectives in Qatar. We start with a brief review of the bilateral relationship, then we discuss several key trends through 2011 that the U.S. Mission has identified. Finally, we provide our analysis on how to advance our military engagement with Qatar, including talking points for your meetings with Qatari officials. Warm regards,
Joseph LeBaron, Ambassador

THE U.S.-QATAR RELATIONSHIP

¶6. (C) The breadth and depth of Qatar's relationship with the U.S. is impressive, especially for a small country of only 1.7 million inhabitants, of whom only about 225,000 are actually Qatari citizens.

-- (C) The U.S.-Qatar military relationship is, of course, extremely important. Qatar provides the U.S. military exceptional access to two major Qatari military installations, Al Udeid Airbase and Camp As-Sayliah - perhaps

CENTCOM's most important operating installation in the Middle East outside of military use.

-- (C) Until recently, the U.S. had never made a major defense sale to Qatar. In July 2008 Qatar signed contracts with Boeing for two C-17s with an option for two more, and with Lockheed-Martin for four C-130Js also with an option for two more. The C-17 and C-130 sales are a signal Qatar is beginning to invest in its own defensive capabilities - with a preference for U.S.-origin equipment -- expressing interest in many other systems, most notably integrated air defense.

-- (U) The broader economic relationship between Qatar and the United States is vital. U.S. energy companies have invested tens of billions of dollars in the oil and gas industry here. Qatar, which holds the third largest natural gas reserves in the world after Iran and Russia, is expected to become in 2009 one of the most important suppliers of imported liquefied natural gas to the U.S.

-- (U) Because it is so small and its energy resources so large, Qatar now has an annual per capita income of over \$60,000. Even with the current global financial crisis, Qatar's national revenues continue to grow, and Qatar now has, according to the IMF, the highest per capita income in the world.

-- (U) Qatar's wealth has bolstered political ambitions, leading to Qatari foreign policy initiatives that are often at odds with U.S. objectives, notably Qatar's relationships with Hamas and Syria. One exception is Qatar's initiative on Darfur, which has U.S. support. Qatar, working with UN and

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African Union Mediator Djibril Bassole, aims to reduce the gaps between rival Sudanese factions with the eventual goal of bringing an end to the misery in Darfur. Before the Sudanese President expelled non-governmental organizations from Sudan in retaliation for the International Criminal Court indictment against him, the results of Qatar's mediation were encouraging. The Government of Sudan and the main opposition group signed a framework agreement for further negotiations at a conference held in Doha in February, and since then the main Qatari negotiator concluded an agreement for the participation of other opposition groups earlier this month in Tripoli.

-- (U) Qatar's location, wide-ranging foreign relations, fast-growing economy, and expanding transportation links have made counterterrorism cooperation, including counterterrorism financing, a key aspect of our relationship. Qatar's wealth, in particular, means its citizens are potential sources of money for violent extremists and cooperative efforts to target and prevent these financial flows are central to our bilateral agenda.

-- (U) Qatar has committed itself like few other Arab states to modernizing its educational system, and has turned decisively to the United States for help. Qatar has imported branch campuses of six U.S. universities, including Texas A&M, Carnegie-Mellon, Weill-Cornell Medical School, Georgetown, Virginia Commonwealth, and Northwestern. It is instituting a U.S. model of charter schools at the elementary and secondary levels.

THE MILITARY RELATIONSHIP: KEY TRENDS THROUGH 2011

17. (S) Following are the key trends over the next three years that we believe will have the greatest impact on our military relationship:

-- (C) Qatar will continue to modernize its military through the purchase of U.S. weapons systems, though competition will continue from the French, British, and others. Despite

Qatar's wealth, defense purchases will be made in the context of a frugal military budget, made worse by the global economic crisis. Economic development will remain Qatar's top spending priority and we have already heard signals that military purchases will be on a slower track.

-- (U) Qatar will continue to face a formidable challenge staffing its military with Qataris because there are so few of them, and because more attractive opportunities exist elsewhere in the government and the private sector. The continued dependence on foreign nationals, particularly in the enlisted ranks, will continue to present concerns about transfers of sensitive U.S. technology.

-- (U) Qatari leadership will seek to increase the prestige of its military within the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the international arena but has no clearly defined strategy for doing so. Likewise, Qatar is attracted to the latest military systems, even while its military modernization is not guided by a national security strategy, at least not one we are aware of.

-- (U) Irritating customs and immigration issues stemming from Qatar's need to demonstrate sovereignty over al-Udeid Airbase will continue to plague the mil-mil relationship for some time to come, although the Crown Prince, Sheikh Tamim, and the Qatar Armed Force Chief of Staff, Major General al-Attiyah, pledged in February to work with U.S. counterparts to put in place reliable procedures and enforce them.

-- (C) We expect that the biggest factor in our engagement in the near-term will be Qatar's sensitivity to the large, enduring U.S. military presence. While Qatar's leadership regards our presence as a permanent and necessary deterrent to the aggression of surrounding states, principally Iran and Saudi Arabia, it does expose it to regional criticism and, potentially, to terrorist attack.

-- (C) We expect, therefore, that Qatar will continue to pursue a policy of strengthening and deepening the military relationship through increased combined planning, training, exercises, and operations - along the lines of the relationship that exists between the U.S. Forces in Korea and the Republic of Korea Armed Forces.

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MILITARY ENGAGEMENT: SUGGESTED POINTS FOR OFFICE CALLS

18. (C) Your visit is an opportunity to deepen our strategic, operational and tactical cooperation with the Government of Qatar. Your visit also provides us with an opportunity that is rare - meetings and discussion foQatar military and civilian leadership with the senior U.S.official in the field of military intelligence. Here's how we can best move forward U.S. efforts on this front:

19. (S) PROMOTE INTELLIGENCE AND INFORMATION SHARING EFFORTS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES:

-- (S) The ILiAD, comprising the Combined Media Processing Center-Qatar, the Open Source Center, and the National Virtual Translation Center, has become a valued and vital asset in theregion. The products, information and training allow not only the military, but all government entities in the region, to benefit from the capabilities provided by all three organizations. If you agree, efforts should be made to explore ways to share this information with our Host Nation allies.

-- (S) You should be prepared to explore with both Chief of Staff Al-Attiyah and Assistant Chief of Staff Sheikh Ahmed ways to expand information and intelligence exchanges with

Qatar. The current SWEEPTIDE Intelligence Exchange agreement allows for two exchanges and two seminars per year. An expansion of these efforts could include the use of CENTCOM and NAVCENT assets currently located in theater, willing to work with the Qatar Armed forces, and coordinated through USDAO Doha.

¶10. (S) PROTECTION OF CRITICAL ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE:

-- (S) Security of Qatar's oil and natural gas infrastructure, especially the North Field off the northern tip of the country, and the on-shore gas liquefaction facilities at Ras Laffan, are of high interest to the U.S. We recommend you solicit Qatari views on their plans for security of this critical national asset and explore ways that intelligence and information exchanges might assist. Recent USDAO reporting outlines a picture of little capability in defending Qatar's economic well-being. Armed smuggling, piracy, and potential terrorist activity in the North Field would be felt around the world.

-- (S) You should mention that maritime security around Ras Laffan, Halul Islands, and the North Field should be an important agenda item for the Qataris at the next SWEEPTIDE Intelligence Exchange. Because we assess cooperation and the sharing of intelligence within the Qatar Armed Forces and between all Ministries to be poor, we should look for opportunities to encourage greater Qatari interagency coordination as well as to discuss energy infrastructure security with key USG officials.

¶11. (S) DEVELOPMENT OF A NATIONAL MILITARY STRATEGY:

-- (S) We have long believed that Qatar lacks an overarching national military strategy. During GEN Petraeus' visit last month, MG Al-Attiyah said they had developed one, but we have never seen it and have no way to judge its quality or sophistication. GEN Petraeus offered CENTCOM assistance in development of such a strategy, something the Crown Prince accepted. (Qatari military officials were less enthusiastic.) GEN Petraeus assigned coordination with Qatar to his J-5 planners.

-- (S) You should reference GEN Petraeus' discussion with the Crown Prince and note that a small team from CENTCOM J5 will be travelling to Qatar in the near future to begin discussions on the way-ahead in preparing a national military strategy. You might add that the Defense Intelligence Agency is willing to assist in any way possible to ensure the success of this planning effort.

SUGGESTED POINTS FOR THE CROWN PRINCE

¶12. (C) Most major military decisions, especially those that affect both the Qatar Armed Forces and the Internal Security Force, are made by Sheikh Tamim and his father, the Amir. Major weapons sales and interagency coordination among the various arms of Qatar's security apparatus fall within Sheikh Tamim's portfolio. To that end you will want to reiterate not only the points mentioned above, but also the following:

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-- (C) Describe briefly for Sheikh Tamim your role within the Department of Defense, and the contribution that the DIA can make to our strategic objectives in the region.

-- (C) As stated earlier, a team from CENTCOM is prepared to visit Qatar in the near future to begin working with the Qataris in developing a national military strategy.
LeBaron